



May 13, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NAGC Names Virginia Department of General Services Dena Potter as Communicator of the Year

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (May 12, 2022) – The National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) announced Friday that Dena Potter, Director of Communications for the Virginia Department of General Services (DGS), has been named its 2022 Communicator of the Year. In 2021, Potter held several high-profile communications roles, both with DGS and Vaccinate Virginia.

The Communicator of the Year award recognizes a government communicator who has fostered public trust and personifies the role by delivering timely, accurate and meaningful information to the public.

At the height of the pandemic in February 2021, Virginia's governor requested Potter to lead the communications efforts for Vaccinate Virginia, which struggled to get people vaccinated against COVID-19. Prior to her arrival, the state ranked 50th for vaccine delivery. Through the execution of her strategic communications plan, Potter worked with local, state, and national organizations and the media to construct messages to communicate with residents about the importance of vaccinations through various platforms. Potter's efforts resulted in a significant increase in vaccinations between February 2021 and May 2021. Vaccinations in Virginia went from 11.8 percent to more than 55 percent by the end of her tenure. Similarly, fully vaccinated rates rose from 3.8 percent to 45 percent in that same timeframe. Virginia also entered the top 10 in the country for vaccine delivery.

After leading Vaccinate Virginia, Potter returned to DGS where she served as chief communications strategist. Among other responsibilities, she crafted and oversaw the media relations surrounding the controversial removal of the state-owned Robert E. Lee monument.

Immediately following, Potter then oversaw the transition of power of the Commonwealth's governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, and inauguration activities.

"At the height of a global pandemic, Dena Potter rose to the challenge when state leaders called upon her to cultivate a communications plan that would resonate with the public and urge them to get vaccinated against COVID-19," said NAGC President Scott Thomsen. "Dena's efforts more than paid off."

Joe Damico, Director of the Virginia Department of General Services, added: "We are fortunate to have Dena's professional expertise, talent and creative perspective at DGS. We are all proud to see her recognized on a

national stage for her exceptional work this past year. We know she will continue to do great things in the years to come.”

As Communicator of the Year, Potter joins a prestigious group of noted communicators who have exemplified the ethics of good communication and good government through their professionalism and superior performance in serving the people of the nation.

Potter is a former journalist with *The Associated Press*, where she specialized in state government and public safety reporting before becoming news editor over Virginia and West Virginia in 2011. Prior to joining the AP, she served as editor of the *Appalachian News-Express* in Pikeville, Ky.

Potter has a bachelor’s degree in journalism and a minor in political science from Eastern Kentucky University and a master’s in mass communication/strategic public relations from Virginia Commonwealth University. She is a graduate of the Virginia Executive Institute and the Commonwealth Management Institute.

The NAGC Board of Directors selected Potter from a field of impressive nominees from federal, state, and local government agencies.

Established in 1976, NAGC is the only national not-for-profit association dedicated to advocating, promoting, and recognizing excellence in government communication. NAGC provides world-class communication training to its members and non-member government communicators through its annual Communications School and monthly professional development opportunities. Learn more about NAGC [here](#).